

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1905

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

TO THE

AYLSHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

TO THE

Chairman, Ladies, & Gentlemen of the Aylsham Rural District Council.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you a Report on the Health and Sanitary condition of your District for the year 1905.

POPULATION.—The census of 1901 showed the population of the District to have decreased by 400 in the preceding 10 years. Assuming this rate of decrease, *i.e.*, 40 per annum, to have continued I estimate the population at the middle of 1905 to be 16893.

BIRTHS.—The total number of Births registered during the year was 342 (males 179, females 163). The Birth-rate stands at 20·2 per 1000 population, an extremely low figure when compared with that of the whole of England which for the last year was 27·2.

The study of the columns in Table II which relate to the number of births in the District for the past ten years is exceedingly interesting though possibly somewhat depressing. Taking the District as a whole a steady decrease year by year is shown in the number of births registered, but the most remarkable feature is the great difference displayed by the figures in the two sub-districts. As has been noticed in former reports Agriculture is the sole industry of the Eynsford sub-district, while in the Buxton sub-district many other industries are carried on which contribute to the prosperity of its inhabitants. Dependent, as I believe, in no small degree on this difference in the prosperity of the two sub-districts is the marked difference in their birth-rates. The number of births in the Buxton sub-district shows only a slight decrease in the last ten years, and the number registered in 1905 was only twenty two below the average. The figures in the Eynsford sub-district on the other hand bring out in a very striking manner the influence the present depression in Agriculture is having on the birth-rate in Rural Districts. In the year 1896 the number of births in the Eynsford sub-district was 232, and in 1905 there were but 118, or little more than half the number registered ten years previously. The birth-rate in this sub-district has now reached the low figure of 15·4 per 1000 population.

DEATHS.—The total number of deaths registered during the year was 271, which gives a death-rate for the District of 16·0. This is somewhat above what is usual, and is to be attributed to the high mortality among persons at ages over 65. With the exception of influenza epidemic disease accounted for but few deaths.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.—Such importance is attached by the Local Government Board to questions affecting infant life that an additional statistical table has this year been added to those usually attached to the Annual Reports of Medical Officers of Health. It deals exclusively with the causes of death in infants under one year of age at various age periods.

There were thirty-nine deaths of infants registered in your district during the year. Of these, the greater number occurred in the Buxton sub-district corresponding with the higher birth-rate.

For the whole District the infant mortality stands at 114·0 per 1000 births. This is about the usual rate, and although not above the average rate for rural England, it can hardly be considered satisfactory that an infant born in this District should not start with a clear ten to one chance of surviving the first year of its life.

The causes usually assigned for an excessive infant mortality are :—(1) the employment in factories &c. of married women ; (2) insanitary condition of the homes of the poorer classes ; (3) infant insurance ; (4) the overlying of infants ; (5) the ignorance of mothers in the feeding and general care of their infants. The first three have I believe not any great influence on infant mortality in this District, and although cradles are little used I have no recollection of the death of any infant being brought about by overlying. There can, however, be no doubt that the deaths of many infants are due entirely to the gross ignorance of mothers as to how to feed and care for their offspring.

Much good has been done in recent years by knowledge diffused by District Nurses and popular lectures on matters relating to health, and I would suggest for the consideration of the Council a further means by which such knowledge might well be spread where and when it is most needed. At the time of the registration of the birth of every infant the parent receives a schedule relating to Vaccination. It would be a matter of little trouble and trifling expense if at the same time the parents were presented with a small pamphlet containing simple hints as to the best way of feeding and caring for the infant registered. It is quite possible that some of the nineteen infants certified as dying during the past year from Enteritis, Debility, Convulsions, Bronchitis, and Pneumonia, might now be alive and well had their mothers been possessed of the useful hints such pamphlets would have given them.

OLD AGE MORTALITY.—A large proportion of deaths of persons over 65 years of age is usually recorded in my Annual Report. During the past year the number was exceptionally large, being 134 out of a total of 271 deaths at all ages.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The number of notifications of Infectious Disease received during the year is well within the average.

Of the forty-four notifications eighteen related to Erysipelas, leaving but twenty-six of any serious importance.

There were but four cases of Enteric Fever and two of Diptheria in the whole District. This is highly satisfactory.

The single case notified as Puerperal Fever was mild in character and the patient made a rapid recovery.

There were nine cases of Scarlet Fever notified.

SCARLET FEVER.—This disease spread from the Smallburgh District through children from the Parish of Felmingham attending the Colby School. Fourteen cases occurred in the Parishes of Banningham and Colby, and it was found necessary in order to check the Epidemic to close for a time the Colby School.

A single case was notified from Ingworth and four from Wood Dalling, but in these Parishes the precautions taken were successful in preventing the spread of the disease.

The following table gives the distribution of Scarlet Fever as to locality and time of year. It will be noticed that nearly all the cases were notified in the Autumn months, the season most favourable for the spread of Scarlet Fever.

TABLE SHOWING INCIDENCE OF SCARLET FEVER.

1905.	BANNINGHAM.	COLBY.	INGWORTH.	WOOD DALLING	TOTALS.
JANUARY.....					
FEBRUARY					
MARCH					
APRIL					
MAY.....					
JUNE					
JULY	1	2			3
AUGUST	2		1		3
SEPTEMBER ..					
OCTOBER.....		6			6
NOVEMBER ..	1	2		4	7
DECEMBER ..					
TOTALS	4	10	1	4	19

ENTERIC FEVER.—The four cases of Enteric were quite independent of each other. The first occurred in January at Swanton Abbot ; the second in June at Hackford, this was an imported case ; the third in October at Reephram, and the fourth in December at Itteringham. It is a matter for congratulation that in none of these four cases did any extension of the disease take place. This happy result is in no small measure due to the care taken to provide a trained Nurse so soon as the nature of the malady was discovered.


In Enteric Fever so long as the excreta of the infected person are properly dealt with and absolute cleanliness observed in nursing the patient there is little or no danger of the disease spreading. These conditions are only possible where a trained Nurse is in attendance on the sick person, and a good Nurse therefore becomes the surest safeguard against the spread of infection.

DIPHTHERIA.—The District has for many years been practically free from Diphtheria, and during the past year only two cases were notified.

WHOOPING COUGH.—This malady was prevalent in Hindolveston during the early summer and towards the close of the year in Burgh and Brampton. There were but two deaths registered as due to this disease.

MEASLES.—There were but few cases, and no deaths were attributed to Measles.

EPIDEMIC CEREBRO-SPINAL MENINGITIS.—A single fatal case of this interesting disease, which occurred at Cawston, in April, was the subject of a Special Report at the time.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b28817321>

SEPTIC SORE THROAT.—An outbreak at Coltishall of Septic Sore Throat affecting about forty persons were also the subject of a Report. In most of the cases the Sore Throat was accompanied by inflammation of the Cervical Glands which passed on in four instances to suppuration. There was reason for suspecting that the outbreak was due to contaminated milk.

VACCINATION.—From the figures below it will be gathered that primary Vaccination is well carried out in this District and that “Conscientious objectors” are few. Re-Vaccination however is a dead letter and will probably remain so until the next case of Small Pox revives the public interest in adequate protection by vaccination.

VACCINATION, 1905.

IN THE EYNSFORD SUB-DISTRICT.

Primary Vaccinations	...	...	...	...	178
Children exempted under Conscience Clause			...	...	7
Summonses taken out...	...	...	...	...	0
Re-Vaccinations	...	...	...	...	0

IN THE BUXTON SUB-DISTRICT.

Primary Vaccinations	...	...	...	...	235
Children Exempted under Conscience Clause...			...	...	4
Summonses taken out...	...	...	...	...	0
Re-Vaccinations	...	...	...	...	1

SANITARY CONDITION OF THE DISTRICT.

During the past year, in addition to performing their routine work in an efficient manner, your two Inspectors have reported a large number of Nuisances which required for their abatement Structural Alterations. The necessary work in each case has been carried out under their superintendence, and in this way a permanent improvement in the Sanitary condition of the District has been effected.

A commencement has also been made in a Systematic Inspection of the larger villages of the District.

DRAINAGE.—Improvements have been made at the two outfalls of the Aylsham Drains. In the “Meadows” between thirty and forty yards of additional piping has been laid, and at the Millgate Outfall a new Settling Tank has been constructed.

During the last few years the Drainage Systems of Aylsham, Reephams and Foulsham have all in their turn received attention.

The Parish of Cawston is next on the list. Many of the road gullies in the Parish are untrapped, and, since the Drains receive in addition to the surface water for which they were originally intended a considerable quantity of slopwater the evil odours arising from them are neither pleasant nor conducive to health. At no great expense much improvement might be effected in the drainage of this village.

WATER SUPPLY.—A general description of the water supply of the District was given in my Report for 1904. I have to add that during the year six new wells have been sunk and thirteen have been cleared out by order of the Sanitary Committee.

PRIVIES AND DUST BINS.—Nineteen new Privies have been built and fifty five altered or repaired. In this number are included thirty five Bin Privies converted to the Pail system. A large number of nuisances arising from the overflow of refuse and privy bins have been abated after notice served by the Inspectors on occupiers. Little difficulty is experienced in dealing with this class of nuisance where cottages are provided with a garden sufficiently large to admit of the refuse being buried.

In the thickly populated parts of Aylsham, Reepham and Foulsham however, great difficulty is experienced in getting Privy Bins and middens emptied when required. It is in these localities, where cottages are crowded together with little or no garden, that the Privy and Dust Bins are found to be the largest and the deepest for the reason that the occupiers find it both difficult and expensive to have them emptied more than once or at the most twice in the year. The bins must therefore be constructed so as to be capable of storing a large accumulation of filth. In these days of extended sanitary knowledge it is unnecessary to enlarge on the dangers attending the pollution of the air, the soil, and the water supply by these collections. The remedy is obviously to convert in such localities all Privies to the Pail System ; to allow the floor of no Bin or Ashpit to be below the surface level ; and, most important of all, to provide for the systematic removal of the contents of Privy Pails and Ash Bins.

OVERCROWDING.—Eight cases have been dealt with during the year, and in five instances very considerable improvement has been effected.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES, DAIRIES, AND COWSHEDS have been regularly inspected.

MINOR NUISANCES ABATED.—In the Eynsford Sub-District seventy-five Nuisances not involving structural alterations were dealt with. Five houses were reported as filthy and have been cleansed and whitewashed.

In the Buxton Sub-District eighty-one Minor Nuisances were abated.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS ACTS, 1901.—The Table furnished by the Home Office is appended to this Report.

Two Privies which were pointed out by the Inspector of Factories to be required at Mineral Water Factory have been constructed by order of the Sanitary Committee.

The Bakehouses in the District have been specially inspected and are without exception in good order.

I HAVE THE HONOUR TO REMAIN,

YOUR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

HERBERT H. BACK.

Medical Officer of Health to the Aylsham Rural District Council.

ACLE,

March 20th, 1906.

